(b) whether it is also a fact that Air India will require eighteen aircrafts for Air India Express to be launched in April 2005;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Air India plans for flying to new destinations; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Air India has prepared a revised fleet plan for Air India and Air India Express which, *inter-alia*, includes proposal for acquisition of 18 aircraft for operations by Air India Express.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Air India and Air India Express propose to operate to several additional international destinations which include new services/ points in USA, Canada, UK, Italy, Russia, Korea, China, Taiwan, Australia, Nigeria, Mauritius, South Africa and Gulf.

Airport Eeconomic Regulatory Authority

434. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to constitute Airport Economic Regulatory Authority;

(b) if so, what would be its composition and the main functions proposed to be assigned to it; and

(c) by when it is likely to start functioning?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) The proposal for setting up of an Airport Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) is under consideration of the Government.

Air Service Between Kanpur and Delhi

435. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 143 given in the Rajya Sabha on 22nd July, 2003 and state:

(a) the steps taken by Government to operate daily flight services between Kanpur and Delhi and *vice-versa* so far; and

(b) by when it is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Government has laid down Route Dispersal Guidelines with a view to achieve better regulation of air transport services taking into account the need for air transport services of different regions of the country including North-Eastern region. It is, however, up to the airlines to provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability. As such, the airlines are free to operate anywhere in the country subject to compliance of Route Dispersal Guidelines. Further, it is reiterated that no airlines has requested Airports Authority of India (AAI) for operation of scheduled flight through Kanpur Airport.

Aviation Disaster near Mumbai

436. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a major aviation disaster involving three scheduled passenger airlines was averted 100 nautical miles north east of Mumbai on the night of September 23, 2004;

(b) whether it is also a fact that all the three planes were one above the other and appeared as as single radar position symbol on the radar screen;

(c) if so, whether any enquiry has been ordered in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) The matter is under investigation of Director General of Civil Aviation.

Revision of Air Fare

437. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA:
SHRI MURLI DEORA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether airlines in India have decided to increase air fares and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the air fares in India are three times more than elsewhere in the world and if so, the reasons therefor;